

May 2, 2007

Testimony before the Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs in support of Assembly Bill 270, relating to changing the members of the Council on Veterans Programs.

Good morning Representative Musser and members of the committee.

My name is Roger Fetterly. I am here to speak in support of Assembly Bill 270. I am the Legislative Officer for the Wisconsin Council of Chapters of the Military Officers Association of America. We have 5 chapters in the state with approximately 900 members. We are affiliated with the 460,000 members of the national Military Officers Association of America.

Our association, along with The Retired Enlisted Association represents the interests of more than 35,000 active duty, National Guard, Reserves and retired members of the military services residing in or serving from the State of Wisconsin. In many cases our members served 20 years or more in the armed forces of the United States and returned to our native state as veterans. We make a valuable contribution to Wisconsin's veterans community and the State's economy. We are strong supporters of our national defense and we continue to provide financial and morale support to veterans returning to our community.

Membership for the Military Officers Association of America and The Retired Enlisted Association on the Council on Veterans Programs would help us continue to contribute to the well-being of veterans and their families and honor their sacrifices and the hardships experienced in serving our country in face of great danger to freedom and democracy.

We have been working with the Council on Veterans Programs for about the last 3-4 years and they are in support of our membership on the Council.

I have not seen a fiscal note on this bill, but the cost should be negligible or neutral because our membership on the council would be offset by the deletion of two inactive organizations from the Council.

We ask for your support on AB 270 and thank you for considering this legislation.

Roger Fetterly, Major USMC (Ret)
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RESOLUTION OF THE WISCONSIN COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS-MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin Council of Chapters of The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is an affiliate of The Military Officers Association of America, a national association of more than 460,000 active, reserve, guard, retired or former commissioned or warrant officers in all component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service and NOAA, and

WHEREAS, The Military Officers Association of America is a nonprofit veterans association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and to preserving the earned entitlements of officer and enlisted members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors, and

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin Council of Chapters-MOAA represents the interests of more than 35,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve and retired members of the uniform services residing in the State of Wisconsin, and

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin Council of Chapters-MOAA has chapters in the following areas throughout Wisconsin: Southeastern, Southern, Northeastern, Lacrosse and Eau Claire, and

WHEREAS, Many of the members of Wisconsin MOAA chapters have served 20 or more years on active duty or in the uniform services and have a wealth of knowledge and experience in leadership, management and technical fields which can make a valuable contribution to Wisconsin's veterans community and Wisconsin's economy, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin Chapters of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA) is an organization with a mission and purpose similar to the MOAA Council and Chapters, and

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin MOAA and TREA chapters support and participate in events and activities at veterans hospitals and state veterans homes, and military support groups for activated and deployed military units, and

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin MOAA and TREA chapters contribute to the well-being and morale of veterans and their families in our communities and give recognition for their sacrifices and the hardships experienced while serving our country in time of need, and

WHEREAS, Neither the MOAA nor TREA Chapters are represented on the Wisconsin Department on Veterans Affairs Council on Veterans Programs,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the members of Wisconsin MOAA and TREA chapters urge their State Senate and Assembly representatives to introduce and support an amendment to Section 15.497(2) (a) of the Statutes that would add one representative of the Wisconsin Council of the Military Officers Association of America and one representative of The Retired Enlisted Association to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Council on Veterans Programs.

THIS RESOLUTION authorized by the unanimous consent of the members of the Wisconsin Council of Chapters-Military Officers Association of America, assembled at the State Capitol, Madison, Wisconsin on the 13th day of January, 2007.



LtCol. Edwin S. Addison III, USAFR (Ret)

Secretary, Wisconsin Council, Military Officers Association of America

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF ASSEMBLY BILL 270

Clifton Sorenson, Chair, Council on Veterans Programs

May 2, 2007

Clift Sorenson

Good morning, Chairman Musser and members of the Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs. I am honored to appear before you today. I am Clif Sorenson, Chair of the Council on Veterans Programs and I wish to go on record, along with the Committee on Veterans Programs members, in support of Assembly Bill 270. Further, I thank the authors of this legislation for bringing it forward to the Legislature and this Committee. The Wisconsin's Council on Veterans Programs was created under Wis. Stats. s. 15.497(2). The statutes specify, "There is created in the department of veterans affairs a council on veterans programs consisting of all of the following representatives appointed for one-year terms by the organization that each member represents:"

The Council consists of twenty-four representatives of organizations who work on behalf of veterans here in Wisconsin. I will not list them all at this time, with your approval.*

The duties of the Council on Veterans Programs per Wis. Stats. s. 45.03(3) specify that the Council on Veterans Programs shall advise the Board of Veterans Affairs and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs on solutions and policy alternatives relating to the problems of veterans.

The main reason for this specific legislation, Assembly Bill 270, is that there never existed previously any protocol to follow for the Council members to recommend removal from the Council of any organization that was no longer active. Nor did we have any way to recommend adding new members.

As you are aware, additions or deletions of members from this Council is within the authority of the Legislature.

Our Council has now added to our protocol specific directions to remedy this situation.

Before you today in this Bill, AB 270, is the recommendation for the removal of two fine, but inactive organizations - the Federation of Minority Veterans, Inc. and the Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc.

Since these organizations were inactive and neither attended Council meetings nor corresponded with us, we made a last effort to resolve the issue. The Federation representative, Robert Cocroft, responded to us in a letter in July 2006, that the Federation is no longer active and is not conducting regular meetings. Also, with the passing of the last Wisconsin World War One veteran in 2005, there are no longer any members of the Veterans of the World War I organization in Wisconsin. Nationwide, there remain only four persons who served during the Great War living in America.

Two prominent organizations have approached us asking for support of their application for membership on the Council – the Wisconsin Council of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA). They represent many retired officers, warrant officers and enlisted members of our military branches.

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Preamble states the following:

- To inculcate and stimulate love of our country and the flag;
- To defend the honor, integrity, and supremacy of our National Government and the Constitution of the United States;
- To advocate military forces adequate to the defense of our country;
- To foster the integrity and prestige of uniformed service;
- To foster fraternal relations between all branches of the various Services from which our members are drawn;
- To further the education of children of Service personnel;
- To aid personnel of the Services from which our members are drawn, and their family members and survivors, in every proper and legitimate manner; and
- To present their rights and interests when Service matters are under consideration.

The Retired Enlisted Association TREA's Mission Statement is:

To enhance the quality of life for uniformed services enlisted personnel, their families and survivors-including active components, Reserves, and National Guard; and all retirees; to stop the erosion of earned benefits through our legislative efforts, to maintain our esprit de corps, dedication and patriotism, and to continue our devotion and allegiance to God and Country.

Again, thank you for having this Committee hearing today and thank you for listening to our reasons for supporting Assembly Bill 270.

***Additional Resource Material:**

Member on the Council on Veterans Programs:

(a) One representative each of the state departments of:

- the American Legion,
- the Disabled American Veterans,
- the Veterans of Foreign Wars,
- the Marine Corps League,
- the Navy Club of the U.S.A.,
- the Veterans of World War II (AMVETS),
- the Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc., (Inactive)
- the American Ex-prisoners of War,
- the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc.,
- the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.,
- the Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A.,
- the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.,
- the Polish Legion of American Veterans,
- the National Association for Black Veterans, Inc.,
- the Army and Navy Union of the United States of America,
- the Wisconsin Association of Concerned Veteran Organizations,
- the United Women Veterans, Inc.,
- the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II,
- the Federation of Minority Veterans, Inc., (Inactive)
- the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans, Inc., and
- the Military Order of the Purple Heart

(b) One representative of the American Red Cross.

(c) One representative of the Wisconsin county veterans service officers.

(d) One representative of the Wisconsin chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America.



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April 26, 2007

Representative Terry Musser
Room 11 West, State Capitol
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Musser,

On behalf of the County Veterans Service Officer's Association of Wisconsin, I would like to lend our wholehearted support to Assembly Bills 201, 202 and 270.

These bills represent another step forward in your on-going efforts to enhance the "Total Package" of benefits available to the Wisconsin men and women who have served, and continue to serve, our State and the United States of America.

Our Association stands ready to assist you, and your Committee in moving these bills forward, to what we all hope, will be their final approval and enactment.

If you, or your staff have any questions, or if we can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me at 262-284-8325.

Sincerely,

Ken Brown

Ken Brown
Legislative Chair
CVSO Assoc. of WI